

The background of the page is a landscape photograph. It shows a grassy hill in the foreground, with several bare trees on the crest. The sky is a vibrant blue, filled with scattered white clouds. A bright sun is visible in the upper left corner, creating a lens flare effect that streaks across the sky. The overall mood is bright and clear, typical of a winter day.

The Register *Winter 2007*



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The Register

Winter 2007

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VERMONT

I slurp the root beer, bubbling on a sugar high
Burping confidence and swaggering with the music
It's not hard to, with the pool table clicking at my heels
I'm high on unadulterated teenager arrogance
And I pity those in the woods, drunk as death and high as life
On substitutes, pure manmade substances
Playing billiards with best friend and tent-mate, we waltz –
Slowly, carefully, laughingly with Lady Luck, losing every time
It's only natural, and always fun
Playing pranks, toilet paper tents and hose-downed drunks
Shuddering at out-houses, shrugging and slipping through brooks
Dunking in ice-cold water, and giggling at dumb drunk dudes
Slurring pride
Snoozing like logs sheltered in tents and scared of spiders
Waking in sleepy eyed saunas in the early morning sun
A carbonated taste of life, experiences, and little lessons:
 "Never get that drunk"
Fireworks and fun on the Fourth of July

Hannah Rigg, III





A Glow in the City

Inspired by Martin Lewis

There's nothing more enticing than a cool night breeze after being caught in a hot, stuffy room. She can't resist stepping out onto the old, rickety fire escape to feel it caress her hot, sweaty skin. It's too nice a night to spend sleeping. The times are changing, and yet another beacon rises from the metropolis, a beacon saying "this is where you want to be tonight." She looks up at the night sky, midnight blue from the myriads of lights, and sliced to pieces by the heavy duty ropes supporting the multitudes of hosiery and bed sheets that replace the evanescent stars. Outside the fulminous glow of the city, everything is a wash of grays and blacks.

Here and there, the pantyhose are speckled by tears, and the fabric of the sheets is worn thin from constant use. Everyday, another one joins the masses. The people that own them can't do anything about it; nothing is wasted when you're trying to make ends meet. And God knows, it's getting harder everyday for them, because work's getting scare 'round these parts, and the lines at the soup kitchen are getting longer. It's hard for the people's contender to fight when he ain't got nothing in his belly.

People are just trying to take care of the little ones, and from inside, she can hear her little ones whimpering in their sleep, and she knows that tomorrow, she may not be able to feed them, if Joe doesn't get a job down at the docks, then she doesn't know what she'll do. Nowadays, everyone's growing skinny on neediness. But God knows, it's not like they haven't been trying. It seems that the only way to make it in these parts is to be part of the right type of people, and she and Joe both know that they're too honest for that.

There ain't no use in living in the old days anymore. The days of the flapper dresses and vaudeville are drawing to a close, and after the final echo of the last tap has died, there's nothing left. Except for the smoke and grime of a city filled with people living hand to mouth. And they're all living on the fringe, looking for a way to make it to that golden beacon. But they ain't moving. And beneath the squalor, the city is boiling over with the indignity of having to watch its children cry for another morsel, and having nothing left to give. And the gears of the city are turning on the sweat from the backs of the honest men just trying to make it by.

Before too long, all hell's gonna break loose, and they're gonna keep that city up all night with their screams. She feels the cool breeze blow over her parched skin, and knows that soon, soon things will change.

Stacey Leonard, II





DONUT

7EARS

I remember bus stops in the morning. The old Polish lady from down the street waited with her sullen grandson, and I with my dad. The bus stop was so much more enchanting, so dirty and fabulous, without the older boy casting gloomy Eastern-block shadows on it, but I tolerated him. It was best when it snowed, and the plows sputtered and complained in the street. The drifts blackened around the edges and became slick. This made them fascinating, made them dark and intriguing, like salty popsicle castles that stuck all over me.

My dad's face was a wash of buggy-eyed glasses, wiry black hair blooming around his ears, and a big red nose he mopped with a handkerchief. He was tall and made of angles, his hand holding mine like a soft-bone fortress. He would try to fix one of the yellow plastic bunnies that had been wrestled into my braids only ten minutes earlier, nodding and smiling at the old Polish lady the whole time. He punctuated the conversation with "Oh yeah?" and a rooster pose with his hand on his hip and one leg out, like what the old lady had said was comprehensible at all and was even the most lovely and musical thing he'd ever heard.

She reminded me of a sack of tweed, with penguin legs and plaid kerchiefs tied resolutely under her chin. My nana was much more fashionable than the Polish lady, but I kept my nana in my pocket at the bus stop. I didn't want to offend the Polish lady by pointing out how lacking she was in gem sweaters emblazoned with fabric paint or country line dancing skills. I let her smile at me and crow in Polish about how pretty and amazing I was. I knew this was what she was saying by the way the consonants hit at each other so jauntily. It tasted like flattery to me, like the end of the day, when my father would pick me up and we'd take the clackety caterpillar train to Forest Hills where he'd buy me a chocolate glazed from the donut place if I was good and didn't screech and cry for the whole way there.

On the bus I'd ask my dad those lofty questions little kids ask with Freud faces. Questions like, "Daddy, if blind people don't see anything, then what do they see? Is it black behind their eyelids like mine?" Dad would look at me with his that's-a-good-question look, eyebrows raised and lips pursed, saying, "That's a good question, Rosie. I don't know." On the train I'd scramble around my seat, searching for hidden depths in torn black leather, new scenery out the cloudy windows, pictures on the wall I hadn't seen before. I was stalling, avoiding my father's shushing hands, trying to keep the taste of freedom in my mouth before we got to pre-school.



When we arrived, I wouldn't let go of him. I'd let the donut-soaked tears fill up in my face and pull at his pant legs, saying, "Daddy, don't go, please," like my heart was in him, and his face would get chagrined because he knew this was coming all along. Suddenly all his angles were awkward, unable to truly fathom why I could be so attached to him, when it was so obvious he was having problems, too. He was the one who hopped the bunnies into my hair.

I'd be happy soon enough, learning about pattern recognition, how to win friends and influence pre-schoolers. But in those moments I'd watch him from the window as his soft-bone hands retreated into jacket pockets, leaving me alone with all the other abandoned babies waiting for their fortresses to come back.

Roisin Foley, II



Auto-Cannibalism

As the memories come
With the snow falling on the hard cement
And the mind, flooding itself to its banks
And we consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back.

Believing is one concept
While knowing is another
The child sighs with a heavy heart
And we consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back.

Years may pass by
Slowly, but surely
Why does recollection make it so quick?
And we consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back.

Soft voices sing
And a scream obstructs the harmony
The tempo is off, the pressure is on
And we consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back

And when we eat
When we eat at ourselves, our thoughts, our lives
We can not help but think
We consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back.

'What is wrong?'
You can not heal an inner pain as quickly
The question goes unanswered
And we consume ourselves
We consume ourselves to such an extent
There is no turning back
There is no turning back anymore.

Andy Vo, V

Men's Room Sign

The Men's Room Sign: simple and universal, it is essential to our lives. It symbolizes one of our most basic needs. We scour the globe in search of it, and finally uncover the sacred hieroglyph with a sigh of relief and satisfaction. It embodies our everlasting desire to purify ourselves, to rid ourselves of the evils of the world, and to start afresh. The mere sight of it causes us to dream of new beginnings.

Think of the actual symbol itself. Concentrate on its exact form. Long arms, long legs, broad shoulders. Tall, dark, and handsome. The strong, silent type. The epitome of manliness. He stands up for what is right, for what he believes in. He needs no words to convey his message; one look at him and you can understand exactly what he means. He will endure for all time, unwavering in his sense of duty. He serves as the ultimate male archetype. A constant reminder of what we as men could be, what we should be. He guards the portal; and only through him, can we find relief.

Alec Mauré, I



Norman Rockwell's



Marriage License

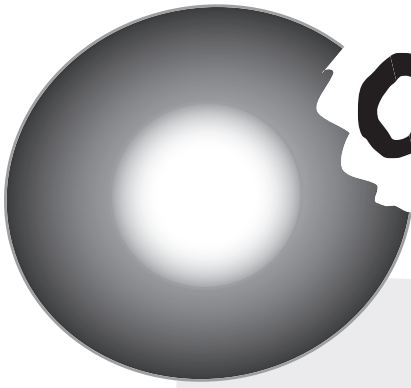
Dedicated to everyone who encouraged me to take this piece as far as possible.

The couple entered the room that would change their lives, and found it musty, messy, cramped: the wallpaper was peeling, cigarettes littered the floor near the ashtray, an American flag was crumpled and shoved carelessly on the top of the bookcase. This was the clerk's way of life, day in, day out, watching bright-eyed young people through his glasses, waiting not-so-patiently as they took their time filling out the forms for the marriage licenses—really, he thought, he couldn't have chosen a more boring job. The eager couple before him, flushed with youth and excitement and inexperience, began filling out the forms with ardor. There were no hesitations on their part except to confer in quiet murmurs that barely concealed their anticipation, and then the lady stood on tiptoe in her high-heeled shoes in order to pen the information in her petite gloved hand. The man held the paper steady for her, held *her* steady, gently wrapping one arm around her—she loved it when he did that; the clerk suppressed the urge to roll his eyes. They're all the same, these young people, blazing with love and hope for the future, they don't know what they're getting themselves into, why are they rushing so blindly into the rest of their lives? Slow and steady wins the race; unfortunately, this day was much too slow for the clerk's taste—it was a bright June day, a Saturday no less, and he could see the sunlight streaming in from the beautiful outdoors, lighting up the lady in her pastel yellow dress as though she were on stage, well, now she's getting ready for her next act. And her fiancé noticed the sun too, it was lovely and golden, like her dress, like her—he loved the way the sun shone on her silky brown hair, she was an angel in high heels, her dainty hand forming neat words on the forms, her lips full and pursed in concentration, her eyes lowered, she was as gorgeous as—well, as that rose there, the single rose on the windowsill, stretching its emerald green leaves out towards the inviting sun, holding its proud ruby red head high. The flower itself brought light and joy to this dingy little office, the clerk's wife had made him bring it in since the first time she'd come to his office one day, she'd said to him in that tone that meant he had to obey or

pay the consequences, you've got to lighten up this fusty place—I know, I'll pot you a lovely rose from our garden—your garden, he'd corrected her, he didn't want anything to do with gardens, all he could see was a bunch of weeds and more work for him, so he let her do that work, since she apparently enjoyed it—she always said she could see beautiful flowers like jewels in the rich soil; she must need glasses, the clerk thought contemptuously—still, the rose added a nice touch to this room, and the couples always exclaimed at its beauty when they came in (that is, the women would exclaim, the men would smile and nod in mindless acquiescence). Another thing that women loved that he could never get rid of was that damned cat that somehow always found its way into the room, though he would slam the door and shut the window and sit there as the office got stuffier in the summer heat, but the cat would always be there, meowing pitifully, until some lady like the one in front of him, who was about to change her life forever, cried out and picked up the adorable little creature, oh isn't he the cutest thing, she simpered to her love; yes, dear, the man gave the standard answer, but there was a smile tugging at the sides of his mouth too, he loved his fiancée's mannerisms when it came to animals, she loved them almost as much as she loved him, oh they were perfect for each other, wouldn't you agree? they asked the clerk. He hadn't been paying attention, but he guessed their question when he saw their bright, excited faces, and when they laughed and kissed and laughed again, grinning like a pair of fools at the clerk—yes, yes, congratulations, he gave the standard reply, forcing a smile to match theirs—stupid smiles were the easiest to create but the hardest to keep after a while. They thanked him and pranced out into the world of sunlight; thank God they've finally gone, thought the clerk, now I can think in peace until I'm off this goddamned duty. But still, he found himself being foolishly wistful as he looked out the window into the sunlight. Yet the room was stuffy and uncomfortable, his life was stuffy and uncomfortable, he tried to look back to when he was as foolish and eager like that young couple, but the gap of time was too great—Get out! he yelled at that cursed cat, it skittered out of his way and out of his sight but it'd be back, as always; he looked at the rose and wished he didn't always think of his wife when he looked at it. The couples who come in and get their lives changed, they're only in this place for an instant, and to them, it's heaven, though he knew it was hell, but it was his life, his entire life, at least *until death do us part*.

Maya Stroshane, I





ONE-MAN CULT OF PLAIN

As I look through the single pile of records of my entire high school career - old report cards, scores, awards, letters, even poems - I am surprised to find the papers inspire memories, not so much of me, but more of the one who kept them, my father. For instance, we are in a store together:

"A raisin bagel," my father insists to the cashier, "is not a bagel. Neither is anything covered with poppy seeds, onion shavings, or salt. If an object contains wilds berries, chocolate ships, jalapenos, eggs, or anything but bagel, it is not a bagel." The employee nods her head as she hands him his change, while I blush, listening to the same spiel I've heard whenever a tire-shaped object is within thirty feet of my father and me.

Every time, without fail, my father argues thus: a plain bagel is a bagel. Nothing else is a bagel. All bagels are plain bagels.

Anything else is not a bagel.
I tend to disagree with my father's line of reasoning. Just because a bagel contains or is covered by seeds, fish, or some other extraneous material, it hasn't suddenly morphed into a new specimen of food. Most would say my father's arguments are more related to opinion than any real philosophy. However, every time he is buying a bagel, plain, or otherwise, he protests so adamantly that the label of 'bagel' cannot be placed on anything that cannot also be described as 'plain', I begin to wonder about his purpose as he embarrasses me in the bagel shop. Is he really trying to get the world to redefine the food 'bagel,' one store at a time? Or is he simply so consumed with vehemence toward any doughnut-shaped bread with chicken fingers or jelly beans imbedded in it that he feels responsible for enlightening those around him with the true meaning of a (plain) bagel?

And just how far does my father plan to take his missionary efforts to change the definition of a bagel? Even now, there is no consensus on exactly what the food is; sources vary in describing the bagel. Some describe it as yeasty dough that is "boiled, then baked." or one with a "tough, chewy texture." Others won't even describe a plain bagel but only bagels of certain flavors, such as an onion bagel ("bagel flavored with onion") or the algorithm bagel (involving mathematicians and poppy seeds). Still more sources refuse to admit the existence of the food, suggesting instead that the researcher is seeking a definition for "wagel" (also known as waggel, the young of a type of bird formerly considered extinct). If it's easier to find the word for bird babies that almost didn't survive in this world than the meaning of a food consumed every groggy morning by trillions of semi-mindless, pointless two-legged beings, perhaps my father is justified in trying so hard to set people straight about exactly what constitutes a bagel.

Anonymous

Deliverance

The riddles of what we thought we knew
Are starting to ache the paint off these walls
Once built from labor and loss
And fear of redemption.

In colors etched on midnight white
And permanence spoken through strokes of submission
We have fallen into this hole
Rigged with depravity,
Filling these rooms with the screeches of the languid.

On the edge of this cliff
Atop the waves of fatal fear
Misstep would be my safest bet
Where heaven and hell are but one
And cognizance has lost its turn.

Heads rise
And arms rise
And feet for once are grounded
And hands link
And eyes meet
As every lung's empowered.

Mercy is but child's play
Where vengeance is so sweet
When shoes have switched
And miles met
And each prayer finds its face.

Aoife O'Flaherty, IV

THE LAMB'S PLEA TO THEM BOTH



Written in response to Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd."

If all the world were soft and green
And not a lupine creature seen
If all that then I would approve;
Abandon me for wooing love!

We'd happ'ly stand, my folk and I,
Watching the Nymph and shepherd fly,
With crunch of grass, to which sweet song
The nightingale might sing along.

O Nymph! My shepherd's lost his head;
He mutters oaths, neglects his bed;
And what care I in winter's cold
For woolen dress and buckle gold?

A wise, aged ewe still fair like thee
Will only tease the ram he be;
Return his heart and let it roam
Else I be shorn and locked from home.

O Master, let me eat the belt
And nibble roses for my pelt,
For such a love is not to be;
There's no excuse for leaving me

Enjoy the sun and eat thy grass
And let this fit of passion pass;
If all my pleas thy heart may move,
Then live with me free from such love!

Jane Newbold, I



SIX STRINGS OF PASSION



Another afternoon has been surrendered to the endless confusion of my mind. My hands feel like lead; useless lumps unable to write a single word. My eyes refuse to focus, as if the blank page looming before me is Medusa, and avoiding the vacant paper will evade her gaze. I almost wish my brain would turn to stone; it feels as jumbled as a child's toy box. Outside, the bare trees against a dull gray sky echo the dolefulness that fills my soul. Every whisper of an idea is silenced by my vague melancholy.

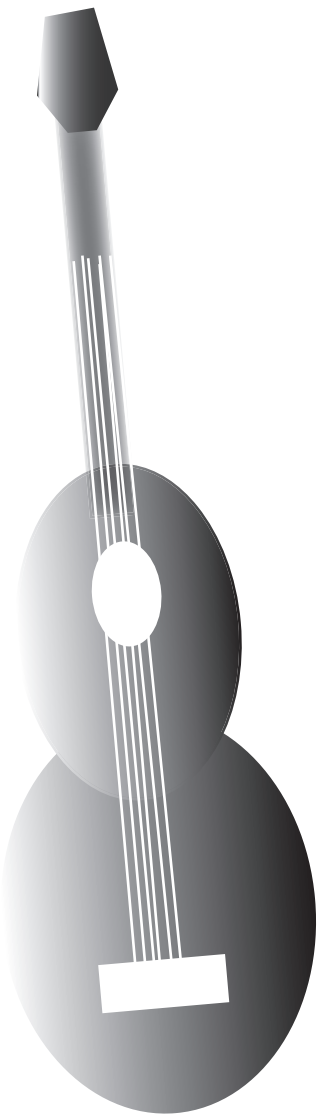
The day's events are whirled together in my memory. None were devastatingly terrible, but each left a bitter taste in my mouth. Looking around my room, the shrine to my interests no longer enlivens me. I wait, desperately hoping that my thoughts will congeal from this haphazard blur into a steel-structured brilliance that spits out compositions with mechanical rapidity.

As my eye search the room for answers, a flash of black against the shocking pink walls bursts into view. At second glance, I recognize the contrasting object as my guitar. It silently beckons me from the corner and I'm in no preposition to resist. My heart begins to race as I plug it into the beat-up amp. It falters for a second and then ignites, as the initial strum of a D major chord quenches my dehydrated ears. The four-wall prison that surrounds me vanishes. I float in this limitless world where grief is an out-of-tune string and pure happiness only begins at perfect intonation.

The sweet strumming that I start with slowly crescendos into a fierce and violent rage unleashed onto a willing victim. Minor chords pierce the air as I pour my feelings into this six-string escape. Each harsh twang soothes my frustrations like a wild breeze on a scorching hot day. The wafting melody begins to numb the disarray that encompasses my mind. Picking the individual notes of my favorite White Stripes song, the repeated G, G, B, C, C feels as natural as a heart beat.

I return to strumming harmonies, focusing now on the dissonant chords of The Beatle's "I Want to Tell You." As the mellow tones drift through the air, my confusion is muffled, and a simple elation takes its place. The sounds do not congeal my thoughts into the steel brilliance I was hoping for, but I suddenly realize that neither life nor music require faultless logic to work. It's unnecessary to always be a major chord, making perfect sense; indeed, it is the dissonant elements in life that provide the most vivid harmonies.

Maria Weissman, III





*Written for Susan Filipi;
A teacher, a role model, a phoenix, a rose*

All who are good must
Come to rest
Why is why I tried
To dry my eyes
In a moment or less

Can't – cry forever
You can't – die forever
And I would never
Prolong what you
Suffered through
The best thing for me to do
Is pay my proper respects to you
And utter the truth

You are a reason I live
Won't let you be a reason I suffer
Instead of falling
I'll just be tougher
Pick up my fallen enemy
Forgive my brother

Make earth a better place to be
Promoting the faith to discover
Love in each other
Looking for greatness to be found
Such as that beauty you brought
When you tread these grounds
And while you've been taken
Your spirit can be found
As your blessings –
Your lesson
Infiltrate my air
I'm confessing
I was misdirected
When I couldn't care

I've fallen
I'm rising
And when I rise I hear

Waiting For

And so
I cannot simply let go
How could I forget to remember
Waiting for December?
When they said you'd be back –
Said I'd – see you again
But when – again came
It wasn't the same

The flame
Was gone from your hair
That which
Wasn't even there
And though your freckles remained
I couldn't see you
Only hands that were maimed
The signs cancer was let win its sick game
The signs of you
Bravely facing your fate
Your time had come
And guarded by grace
You flew to the gates of Heaven to wait
For those whom you love
While we fight letting hate
For God escape
From our lungs

And we are trying so hard
To keep it together
Remembering the soft pink parchment
Of thank you letters
As well as times with you
That couldn't get better

But as well as we
Have to move on
We also all have to fall
To our knees
We have to scream "God, WHY?!"
And we have to grieve

December

And being opposed
To walking on tiptoes
You simply strode
Atop tribulation's toxins
Not in the know
Of what would happen
Or how this would grow
Allowing yourself to glow
Even when your time had come

And I think you should know
We all think you should have won
Although it's apparent
You did all you could have done
But I would have loved to see you grow
And hear more tales being spun
And you deserved your dream
Of being a grandmum
But the whispers of your dreams
Were caught in the wind
And we all listen to the breeze
To hear you sing
And it makes it hard to breathe
All of us still shaken
About your life being taken
Bruised from our waiting

I'm bruised from this aching
I had
Waited for this day and
I had waited for December
Waited to show you how much I've grown
Waited to see that smile I loved and remembered
But I had to cry
I had to try to dry my eyes
We had to say good bye
When that wait was over
As December came cold
On a day in October



Dianna Willard, III

D

Dedicated to Ms. Susan Filipi

It's hard to imagine what life's going to be like without her.
Watching dust gather on her desk and chair
the reddish tint of her hair...
the waiting truth of her smile;
rain drops of reminiscence in this air of sadness.
it's hard to imagine God bestowing wings upon her...
when even when she felt flightless,
her feathers withered and soiled,
she still managed to flutter.
An angel here on earth.
Her strength hit us like lightning, yet caressed us like a mother's touch,
lingering in every breath she took, and in every syllable that escaped her
lips.
In every way imaginable, she was a survivor.
Time can be so cruel,
when even through the tears, the cries, the pain at seeing her family's
anguish...
all you can think about is how you never said 'goodbye.'
It's hard to imagine her embrace
as you face
a dry-erase
board
frantically bleeding out her quintessence through a marker...
a simple utterance of an 'I'll always remember' trapped ruthlessly to your
tongue.
Searching for the words that aren't there,
picking at a wound that's still healing,
Praying the rosary without feeling,
your irises blinded by the sorrow.
The music fades with each note, as your whole world now seems hollow.
It's so hard to imagine not watching her confiscate the cap of some thugged
out 8th grader.
That her beauty is now a mere memory,
her love,
a cascading waterfall showering your soul with peace.
It's hard to imagine her laughter, when she's not around to laugh.
When all you hear are your own outbursts of emotion
a tragically evanescent rhapsody;
each chord resounding of her existence.

u

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It's hard to say that life goes on,
when everything comes to a standstill,
filled with the force of your own smile,
wishing that if only for awhile
you could hear her speak fire
one
last
time.
But time can be so cruel
and dreams are constantly shattering
as lives are endlessly being taken,
I just wish they hadn't taken hers.
Because now all that's left
is her desk.
Pictures still smiling...
Flags still standing...
Pens still waiting to be written with...
and they'll forever be waiting...
as dust continues to wash out her memory.

Rhea Kroutil, II

What Color?

A little girl sits on a bench, digging the heels of her shoe into the dirt. She did not want to go home, or even wish to. Her father and mother had fought for three days already, and the fighting never seemed to cease. She had been worried and tearful when her father had slammed the door to the house, shaking it as if the house were vibrating with the beats of her pounding heart. Her mother too, slammed the door, but it was the door to the parent's room. The girl had been left alone, and probably forgotten, so she decided to go outside by herself for a while.

So drowned was she in her thoughts, that she did not notice a woman sit down next to her. She sat down silently, looking straight ahead. Perhaps she was waiting for the girl to notice her, but the girl did not even stir or take her eyes off from the ground. The girl jumped when the woman spoke, startled by this sudden stranger.

"What color?"

The little girl stared at the woman, not knowing whether she was speaking to her or not. She continued to stare and wonder unblinkingly. The woman had brown hair and hazel eyes flecked with gray. She wasn't young, but she was not old either. Her face held many secrets and wisdom. The woman waited a minute before asking again: "What color?"

The girl was puzzled. How was she to answer this three-word question? Her wide, green eyes flitted everywhere to her surroundings, afraid to look at the woman. She looked at the girl expectedly, waiting for an answer. But the girl could not give one. She did not even know what the woman meant, or what she was asking her. The girl was nervous by this woman, and began to blink fearfully, in her mind begging the woman to leave her alone. The woman stayed, and looked into the girl's eyes, as if looking into her soul, with a calm gaze. She decided to ignore the woman, acting as if she had never seen her. But then again, there it was:

"What color?"

The girl jumped up, with unknown panic, and ran. She looked over her shoulder once, to see if the woman had only been a mirage. No, there the woman was, sitting and staring sadly after the little girl.



A teenage girl sits on the same bench she sat at years before, when her parents were fighting. This time though, it's for a different reason; she and her boyfriend had fought and she had cried to herself bitterly. Her parents had broken up too, a divorce she thought could happen; but all the same it broke her heart to see her world crumbling. Her heart felt as if it could no longer love, and she decided that she would no longer give her heart to anyone again. It was not made of blood and flesh, but of coal. That was how she felt.

An old woman sits down next to the girl on the bench, staying quiet, wondering if the teenage girl would look at her. She does, and her eyes fill with disbelief as the old woman asks: "What color?"

That question, which she had never thought about for so long, suddenly hit her with force. She gasps, while the old woman patiently waits for an answer. The old woman had wispy white hair, covered by a straw hat with fresh flowers in it. She had wrinkles of age and wisdom, and liver spots covered her gnarled hands. She is patiently waiting for an answer, but the teenage girl does not have one; she still does not understand the question even when it is asked again:

"What color?"

The teenage girl tries hard to figure out the question, she tries to think about what the woman is asking her. She doesn't need to though, because one look at the old woman's calm expression, hazel eyes flecked with gray, and caring gaze, and she knows the answer. The old woman knows she knows, and for the last time, asks:

"What color?"

This time, the teenage girl, who was once asked the same question years before, replies: "black, white, gray". The answer she searched for rolled off her tongue as she continued. "My heart is a lump of black coal, my smile feels as if it is no longer joyful but an empty white, and my laughter is not cheerful but a gloomy gray."

Although her answers were not positive, and though any adult would frown at her when they heard this, the old woman merely smiled. She smiled a knowing smile, a smile that spoke volumes. A smile that said that the colors would change, and that they were not permanent. A secret smile that was not just a smile, it was a smile the color of yellow.



A woman sits on the same bench she sat at years ago, when she was a child and a teenager. She smiled lovingly as she watches her daughter smell and play with the flowers. The child laughs with glee and waves to her mother. The woman waves back, shaking her head as she smiles.

Her daughter runs up to her, showing the woman a pile of flowers she held in her hands. The girl is so happy, and the mother playfully asks, "what beautiful flowers! May I have one?"

Her daughter looks at her with hazel eyes flecked with gray. "What color, mommy?"

The woman, who is now a mother, says with a secret smile, "red, yellow, gold."

Beverly Nguyen, V

This was one of Ms. Inez Middleton's most treasured poems. It is republished here in her memory in the hopes that others will enjoy it as much as she did.

BARBIE DOLL

This girlchild was born as usual
and presented dolls that did pee-pee
and miniature GE stoves and irons
and wee lipsticks the color of cherry candy.

Then in the magic of puberty, a classmate said:
You have a great big nose and fat legs.

She was healthy, tested intelligent,
possessed strong arms and back,
abundant sexual drive and manual dexterity.

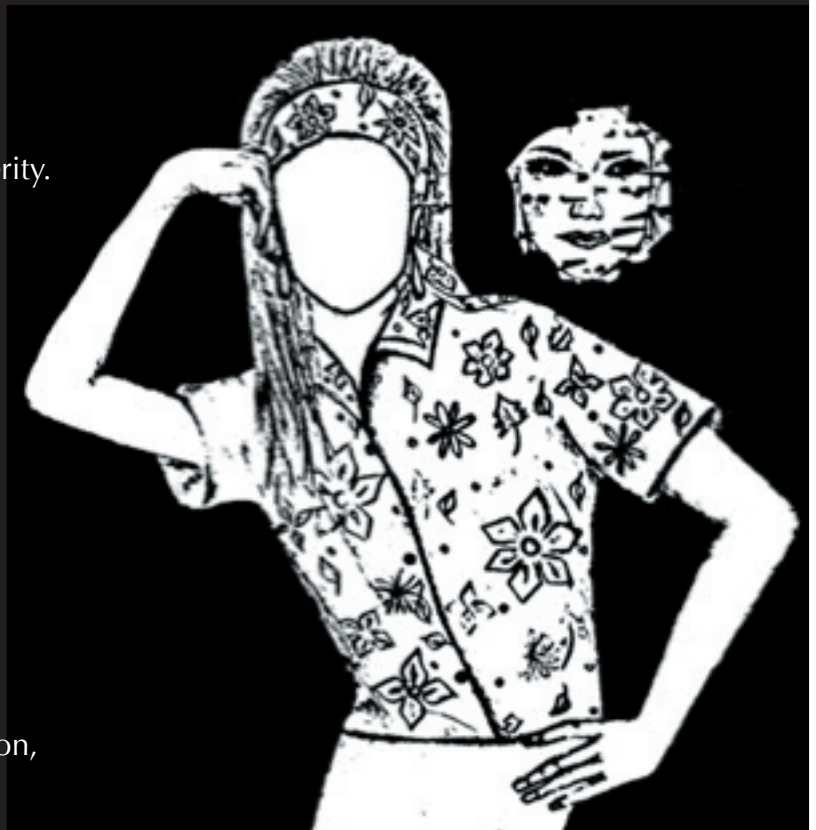
She went to and fro apologizing.
Everyone saw a fat nose on thick legs.

She was advised to play coy,
exhorted to come on hearty,
exercise, diet, smile and wheedle.
Her good nature wore out
like a fan belt.

So she cut off her nose and her legs
and offered them up.

In the casket displayed on satin she lay
with the undertaker's cosmetics painted on,
a turned-up putty nose,
dressed in a pink and white nightie.

Doesn't she look pretty? everyone said.
Consummation at last.
To every woman a happy ending.



Marge Piercy

She was dead.

I leaned my forehead against the cool windowpane, idly watching the heavy, leaden rain striking the glass. The fragments of sky visible through the dark clouds were iron-grey, hard and pitiless.

My mind was numb, in shock. How could she be gone? She had always been there. Even when I hadn't been able to see her, I had felt her presence. But now she was nowhere. Vanished. Disappeared. Like snow in springtime.

The rain fell harder, beating a harsh rhythm I could feel through the glass. My eyes followed a raindrop racing past my face.

I frowned, my eyebrows knitting together, thoughts sluggishly beginning to form, slowly separating themselves from the listless river of my consciousness. She was dead, and it was someone's fault. Someone had to answer for it. But who was "someone"? God? God... How could I have faith in a God who wantonly snatched good people away from the world they loved? The world where they were loved?

A deafening peal of thunder reverberated through the dark sky as my fist connected with the window, the dull clunk and fleeting rattle echoing, mimicking, mocking the imperious rumble without.

Hot, angry tears rolled down my cheeks, spattering softly onto my arm. I didn't bother to wipe them away. She had been taken, forcibly taken from me. I had never had the chance to say goodbye, the chance to hug her one last time and to tell her I loved her.

More thunder. A savage flash of lightning rent the heavens in two, like a jagged fissure cracking a bowl from top to bottom.

I wouldn't have minded if I'd died just then, at that very moment. The sudden, wild thought of throwing myself from the window darted through my clouded mind – if her life had not been worth more time in this world, then surely my own couldn't be.

The thunder faded away. The downpour slowed to a rattling drizzle, a sharp staccato on the wooden sill.

As my mind cleared I was breathing heavily, looking at the floor, as if my head had become too heavy for my neck to support. The hand with which I had hit the window was splayed flat on the pane, the cold seeping into my skin.

She had put her faith in God. She had believed in an undying paradise for the immortal soul. If there was such a place, she would surely be there. If anyone were deserving of such an eternal reward, it would be her.

After the Rain

She wasn't suffering anymore. She had gone to a better place. I would see her smiling face again.

The drizzle thinned into a fine mist, not falling from the sky so much as drifting gently downwards. The clouds shrank in upon themselves, fading from their formerly dark, sooty shade to a delicate, dove-pale grey. A translucent, gauzy ribbon of color stretched upward from the ground before my window, sparkling in the sunlight, seeming as if it would go on forever, like a half-imaginary bridge connecting heaven and earth. If only I could climb it...

I closed my eyes, finally calm, a peaceful smile spreading slowly across my face. A line from a poem of which I had never read nor heard the entirety floated lazily through my mind, haunting and yet oddly comforting.

God's in his heaven, all's right with the world.

Kathryn Roth, I



The Negro and Uncle Sam

Inspired by Claude Clark's Polarization

Well, Uncle Sam wanted to see me beat,
but I told him I won't go down without a fight.
So I put out my arm,
and he puts out his right
and we battle it out
until day becomes night.
I won't quit,
and he won't give in,
so we keep on going;
one of us has to win.
I can tell he's getting tired,
and truth be told, I am too.
But Sam, Old Sam,
he needs to see the truth.
"I'll prove to him just what
the Negro can do.
I'll keep on fighting
'til I turn black and blue."
Night becomes day becomes night once again,
this battle won't end
until one of us wins.
I wait with faith and hope,
determined not to lose.
Sam, Old Sam, watch
what the Negro can do.

Tayla Holman, II



Signs

The cold wind of years has effaced any trace and smell of the man who chose to start his last and forever repose on this Stoughton Street three years ago. He lives inconceivably as a pole on the edge of the sidewalk. A small, brown, furry teddy bear is tied up to this cement pole on its neck by a string. The winds and rains have smashed the smoothness of its fur. It looks like a piece of rag; its muddled fur covers the small, black beads of the bear's eyes.

There are tokens of love for this man, in the form of plastic colorful flowers, which are tied around this pole and are held next to the ragged teddy bear by the same string. White roses for innocence and love, rosemary for remembrance, baby's breath for everlasting love, and carnations for mother's undying love. On this pole, there used to be words in yellow, blue and pink chalk, saying "rest in peace Anthony" or "we will always remember you." Of course, these fleeting multicolor dusts never have to wait for this man to gulp down their sweetness, because the hungry winds always seize the chance to carry them away. After two or three days, there is always something new written on this pole, in different colors. Pictures of hearts are here and there with "we love you" written inside the hearts.



He died here years ago in a car accident. I don't know where he used to live, but they put flowers and signs on this pole, and make him live here. A girl drives her car to this place, walks out, stands in front of this pole, scrawls some chalk on it, and then drives away. Just like that, people have been keeping him here and feeding him with chalk for three years.

Cam Dung Le, II

The Fisher

You can take me away from my sorrow
but you can't erase my scars.

Don't feel bad;
no one has so far.
But Try.

Show me something new tomorrow
so that trust will come more easily.
And tell me jokes so that I'll smile.

And whenever I'm feeling real down
give me a face to borrow.

Just make sure I don't go missing.
Make sure I don't get too lost.

That'll keep me going for a while.

And then,
when the day ends
I'll know that you care.
I'll know that you tried.
That you did a little repair
That you made a little right.

And that'll feel real nice.

You could certainly say I'm hurt.
The scars are apparent.
But I'm cleaning up well
because of you
and your sweet, sweet time.



Lily Burger, V

Tideless

We stopped talking a while back.
I still can't decide if that's a good thing.

It was a hopeless friendship, ephemeral and doomed from the day it started. She and I took the same bus home. She sat next to me in Art class. Reluctantly she became my friend. I tried to be nice to her, I honestly tried. But her views were either too different from or indifferent to my own. After the first few days there wasn't anything left to talk about. We would then sit in vague silence punctured only by the blaring from her iPod.

I never asked her what music she was listening to.
I never really cared.

Apparently one of her popular friends hated me. Or thought I was too much a nerd to be associated with. Or maybe she just never liked me. Either way after a month or so, we stopped sitting together on the bus. We ended even the quiet illusion of friendship. The next year we took different honors and we haven't spoken since.

Now when I greet politely in the hallway,
She gives me a sour look as if it's my fault she's going to be late to math.

We were never really part of each other's worlds. The brief moments in the forgotten afternoons that we pretended to be friends would soon be eclipsed by the hectic days of a stressing high school career. There would be better friends and more interesting acquaintances to meet.

And when I think about it now,
It doesn't seem to bother me too much anymore.

I never really liked her anyway.

Friends change as the years go on. One year they'll be almost sisters and the next they'll avoid even eye contact in the halls. It's a varying fluctuation through the years. But most of the time I know they'll always be within reach. Some day, they'll get back in touch. With her, however, it was as if I was simply looking in on someone else's ocean.

But, for the record, while we were perched atop the capsized friendship vessel, it was nice while it lasted...

And even better when the tide washed it away.





1

In the choir loft
the iron flower slats that wrench open
look down on the radiator and
hot air comes up slow and thick.

It's cold today in the church and my hands are
tucked inside my sleeves and
my mother sings.

My mother sings and her plum shaped voice
clothes and expands her
into the space where the spaces are
and on the ceiling
cracks form.

In the mirror above the organ I can see
the cross where it hangs on the red
at the head of the church above
the pulpit where Philomena is folding programs
on the couch
and her feet don't touch the floor.

2

My mother finds me in my room
dressed like Frida Kahlo and offers to take my photograph
so I sit on the bed with my feet folded under me
the skirt of Frida's Mexican dress fanned out
over the wedding quilt
with my hands folded in my lap and bright
lipstick on my mouth.

Later my mother is asleep in the next room
and I can hear her breathing heavily
the loud snores echoing into the hall
while I take the flowers out of my hair.

Roisin Foley, II

Dress
up



Renoir's *The Umbrellas*

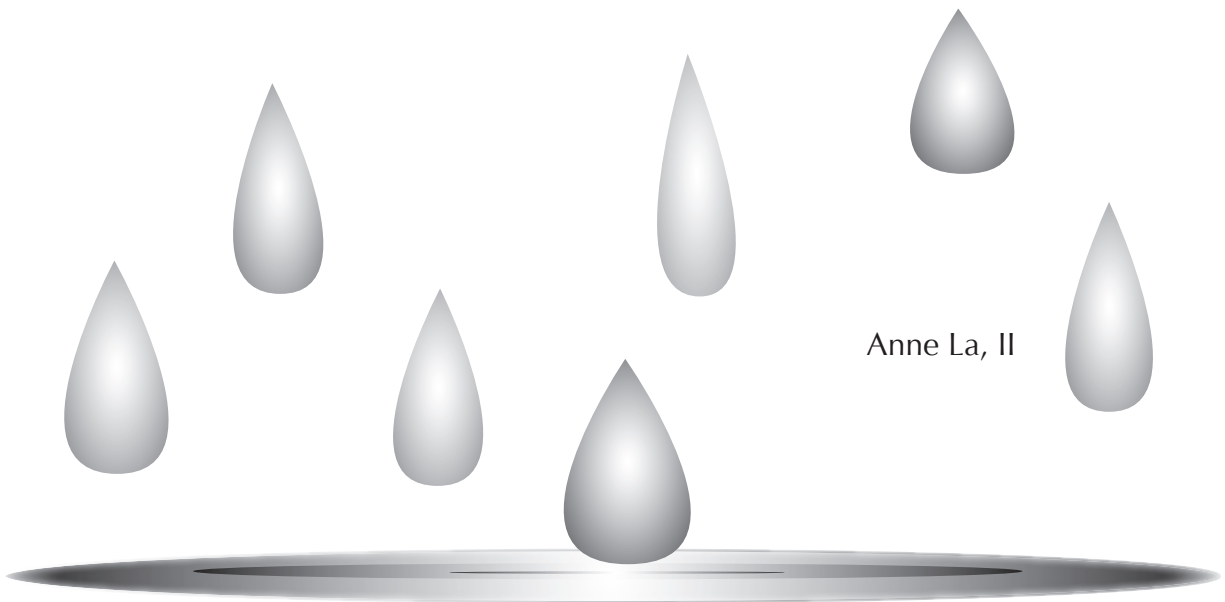


She jostled her way through the crowds on the city streets, wanting to go home. But home was not what it used to be, and it hadn't been ever since her father had succumbed to the illness that had so suddenly overtaken him. Her mother was heartbroken and had spent the past couple of weeks sitting by the window, staring at nothing with that horrible blank look in her eyes. Sometimes, she would find her mother crying, but she herself did not cry. She wouldn't allow herself to.

The death had thrown the household into hard times and she had taken it upon herself to support the family. Each morning, she set out in search of a job. Every day, she was turned away with sheepish, apologetic smiles. She had hoped that today, she'd manage to bring home food. But she'd had no luck on this day either, and the basket on her arm remained depressingly empty.

As she made her way down a wide avenue in the finer part of the city, she found herself in the midst of elegant, wealthy, happy people whom she imagined had never experienced any hardships, had never had a single worry, had never known discontent. Her thoughts drove her to feel even more alone, invisible, and out of place. It began to rain. A perfect end to a perfect day, she thought to herself. She heard the people around her opening up umbrellas and was resolved to walk home in the rain, when a young man walked up beside her. "Here, miss, have my umbrella."

That was the nicest thing she had heard all day, and she started to cry.



Anne La, II



Gone
From
my
Sight

"I stand and
watch her until, at
length, she hangs
like a spec of
white cloud just
where the sea and
sky come to mingle
with each other."

-Henry
Wadsworth
Longfellow

Passing Thought

I remember I've always wanted grey eyes.

I don't know why.

No, I do.

Kevin.

He was black with grey eyes.

I didn't think that was possible.

They were beautiful, those eyes.

Not so much him.

Tall, acne-face, grandfather's glasses, crooked teeth,
and bookish.

He probably owned a library.

He didn't talk much, but I always said "hi" to him.

I'm not sure why.

One day he brought an old, wrinkled book to science class.

He placed it on my desk.

"A Wrinkle in Time" by Madeleine L'engle.

--Meg saves the world in a day and falls for a stranger.

My introduction to first love:

Books.

He fed me his passions and I devoured through them:

Maslow, Mingus, Modigliani, Rodin.

And always

searching grey eyes pierced black depths, to find a core I never knew I had.

Only grey eyes could find me.

An effervescent light of knowledge, charisma, and honesty shone through;
they near glowed, his with the last rays of Friday's sunlight.

Grey Eyes saved my world,
then fell in love with a stranger:

My sister.

Married, two kids, librarian in Boston.

I think I still want those grey eyes.

I don't know why.

Anonymous





What art thou if thou beest not divine,
A perfect creature from the heavens dropp'd?
For with thee my words flow as flows sweet wine;
Without thy love my beating heart is stopp'd.
Imagin'd wings from off thy shoulders spring
And light you dance upon thy graceful feet.
Thy happy voice doth cause my heart to sing;
Thy smile doth shine like gold whene'er we meet.
A thousand beauties could not take thy place;
They win not me as thou hast won my heart.
I wish only to see thy precious face
For all this time I have know what thou art:
An angel fallen from the skies above
The one for me, for me alone to love.

Sonnet I

Kathryn Roth, I

NEVER KNEW

In life, others help us get where we want to go. It's easy to be helped. It's also easy to forget just how simple it is to help others. And it's just as easy to forget how we can hurt others. And thus, the situation at hand.

He never knew she loved him. So, he wouldn't care now. Conclusion...supporting premises...

But first, situation. He can't return the feelings. She refuses to talk to him anymore.

I can't love you. Sorry.
I won't ever talk to you again. "SORRY."

Conclusion: he's heartless. Supporting premises: he made her cry, "it's all his fault," and she won't ever talk to him again.

When he thinks about it, this situation is really the same as when a child refuses to cry, after becoming angry. Or when a teenager, assuming loss, refuses to smile. Or when someone dies and a loved one refuses to let the world move on. And thus the chaos ensues.

Sometime in the near future, he realizes that it is not so much that he CAN'T love as it is he REFUSES to love. That becomes a whole different matter. But let's move on. Because someone has to. She won't; she really can't. She needs him.

And whether or not he cares to tell her, he needs her too. Because being loved is one of the only things that is right in his world. Being loved is one of the only things he can rely on. He needs her as a bird needs its feathers. Not necessary, but nice to have if you want to fly. That's nearly poetic, if you want to think about it that way.

But the world doesn't need either of them.

If they love or hate or feel something in between, the world remains unaffected. It will move on. The world doesn't depend on anything. Sometimes we joke to ourselves that we need to give back to the community because the world needs us.

But the world doesn't need anything we can give. It doesn't need our existence or our environment. It got along fine as a mass of molten lava.

Humans can kill each other all they want. War, peace, it's all the same to me. After all, to me, humans have always been overdeveloped monkeys. Love the world? Sure, if that's how you want to spend your child's college fund. Everything is fine with me. I don't get mad. Why do you think I'm billions of years old and the oldest your parents will be is 76?

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Everything we do for the so-called "environment" is really for selfish reasons. It is for ourselves that we fund environmentally aware groups. It is for our own lives, futures, and communities that we clean and sometimes think about the world on short intervals of an odd Sunday afternoon.

But thankfully, the world remains unaffected.

There are two ways of looking at the world. One as a mass of scientific gas to live on, and the other as a community to call home. Some people never get it right. And from this springs pretty much every problem. For example, the situation at hand.

She needs him, because she loves him.
He needs her, even though he can't love.

In the end, it's really the same. One day, this ill-fated couple will realize it and you'll have your happily ever after. In the end, everyone will realize that everything, every personality, every place in rank, and every problem will clash and become pretty much the same thing. We depend on each other in order to survive. The world isn't going to help any time soon. People are going to help. The sooner we realize that, the sooner we come to our own happily ever after.

Just like he never knew just how much he needs her.
We never knew just how much we need each other.

Lisa Wang, IV





Excerpt from a *((Conversation))*

For Ms. Inez Middleton

me: it's pretty sad
she's not someone you ever thought would actually die

Eva: yeah
I mean, she wasn't always healthy
but she had so much energy

me: i know
and you felt like your BLS experience wasn't complete without having a
class taught by her

Eva: yeaaah
I mean, my cousin went to BLS like 10 years before me
and she ran down a list of teachers she remembered to see if they were still
there and ms. middleton was one of the few who were

me: of course
the young alum of the year
had ms. middleton as a sixie
and she mentioned her in her speech

Eva: yeaaah

me: -sigh- Now future generations of BLSers will never know
And when the class of '10 graduates, there won't be anyone left in the
school who actually had her as a teacher

Eva: yeah
that's awful
she was so insane
in a great way

me: i know

Maya Stroshane, I and Eva Cheung, I



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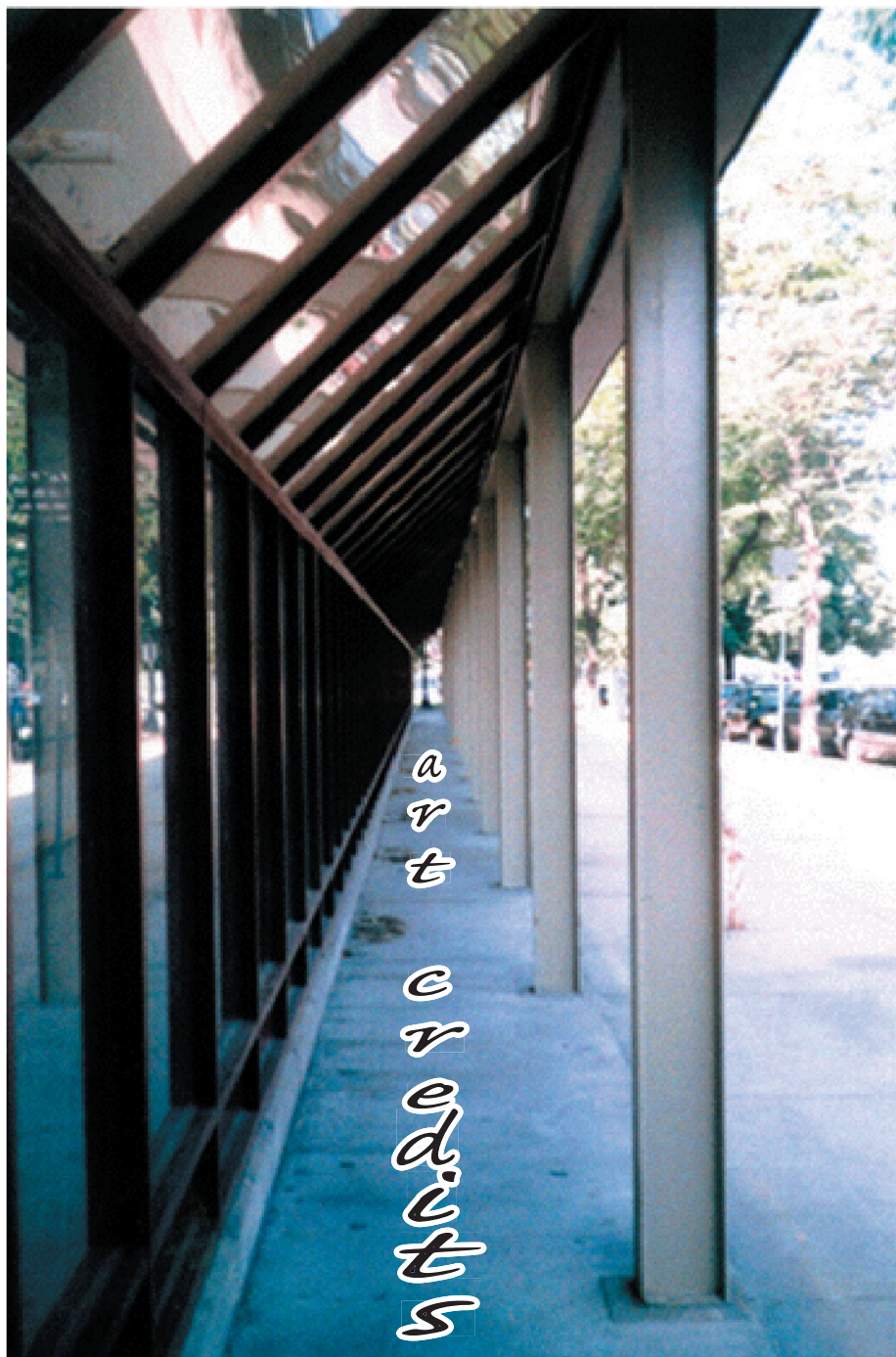
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inside back cover

back cover



Ari Klickstein
Ping Zeng
Gabriella Coloyan
Ping Zeng
Stephanie Chan
Denise Nguyen
Ping Zeng
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Siobhán Henegan
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